

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Thursday, October 19, 2006

Governor Barbour Praises Bush Pick to Head Rural Development Efforts in Mississippi

John Rounsaville, Governor's Policy Advisor,
Appointed State Director for USDA Rural Development

(Jackson, Mississippi) -- Governor Haley Barbour today applauded the Bush Administration's appointment of John Rounsaville as state director for USDA Rural Development in Mississippi. Rounsaville will begin his new duties in November, replacing former state director Nick Walters.

Rounsaville, 31, currently serves as Policy Advisor to Governor Barbour with responsibilities for policy and budget matters related to agriculture, forestry, environment, energy, military affairs, transportation, and workforce training. He has also handled oversight of economic development and infrastructure projects for the Governor's Office.

"John has been a great asset to me and the people of Mississippi," Governor Barbour said. "His work in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina for rural housing, natural resources restoration and to develop utility infrastructure in South Mississippi was nothing short of phenomenal. I am grateful for his service and wish him continued success as he takes the leadership of USDA's Rural Development activities in Mississippi. I know he'll do a great job."

Members of Mississippi's Congressional delegation said they, too, are happy with Rounsaville's appointment.

"USDA's Rural Development programs are very important to Mississippi, and they apply to a wide range of projects from water and sewer upgrades to small business loans impacting cities and counties throughout our state," U.S. Sen. Trent Lott, R-Miss., said.

"John Rounsaville is a Mississippian who understands how these various USDA Rural Development initiatives can be applied toward Mississippi's needs, and his work on Congressman Pickering's staff and with Governor Barbour gives him considerable policy experience and contacts throughout Mississippi and Washington that will serve well in this important post."

U.S. Rep. Roger Wicker, R-Miss., said, "John is an excellent choice to head Rural Development activities in Mississippi. His experience in Washington and on Governor Barbour's staff will serve him well. He understands the process and the potential RD programs offer to help boost economic development and improve the quality of life in our state."

Among his accomplishments in the Governor's Office, Rounsaville led efforts to develop and secure passage of workforce training reforms and other major initiatives of the Barbour Administration to promote economic development and create new jobs.

Before joining Governor Barbour's staff, Rounsaville served as Legislative Director and Deputy Chief of Staff for U.S. Rep. Chip Pickering, R-Miss., in Washington, DC. A native of Calhoun City, he holds a bachelor's degree in Agribusiness and an MBA in Agribusiness Management from Mississippi State University. He and his wife, Laura, reside in Madison.

#